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Professional Wisdom in Adult and Family Literacy

Professional Wisdom as a Cornerstone of Program Management

by Elizabeth B. Thompson, CFLE

The call for articles for this edition reminded us that evidence-based practice is “the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction.”

It has been my observation that a body of professional wisdom develops out of necessity. Research follows necessity. The fields of adult education and family literacy are prime examples of this. The Even Start Family Literacy legislation was passed into law in 1989. The four-component family literacy program as we know it today is barely 20 years old. Professional wisdom exists, but a full body of research surrounding family literacy has yet to develop.

That puts administrators in a difficult position when asked to plan academic programs that are based on research. Administrators of family literacy and, to some extent, adult education, are blazing new paths. I entered the field in 1995, armed with degrees in family studies and a desire to work in a prevention program instead of an intervention program. There were few resources for family literacy administrators at that time. The National Center for Family Literacy had been created, but a professional organization for family literacy practitioners had yet to be formed. Research questions were not yet developed. The best source of knowledge at that time was previous experience and peers.

When blazing new paths, administrators take what they know, apply and adapt. Research follows to confirm what has been learned through experience. We took what we knew, adapted it to family literacy and learned as we went. There were mistakes, but soon the successes became apparent.

Thankfully, there have been some advancements in the research since 1995. The National Early Literacy Panel, National Assessment of Adult Literacy and The National Assessment of Education Progress have all made significant contributions to the body of research in adult education and family literacy.

These studies and others support several strategies for program improvement that confirm current professional wisdom:

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Recruitment and Retention. Every family that is most-in-need is not prepared for the time commitment that is required to participate in Even Start. This supports the need for local programs to screen for most-in-need *and* families that have the ability to participate fully. The concept of screening is now getting more serious consideration in adult education circles as well. Screening for students who are academically in need of services *and* able to participate fully in the services offered sets the stage for a higher degree of student success and program success. Wlodkowski addressed this aspect of student motivation in his work, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching All Adults*.

Staff Development. There is no substitute for a well-trained staff. Since few staff come to adult education and family literacy with academic backgrounds in those fields, local programs bear the burden of staff development. Investments in training pay off in quality of instruction, implementation of procedures such as orientation, proper assessment at the appropriate times and student outcomes. Administrators have learned this through experience. Research now shows correlations between effective professional development and school success. The bonus for administrators is that well-prepared teachers report higher levels of teacher satisfaction.

Instruction. Parents from low-literate or non-literate backgrounds must be directly taught how to incorporate literacy activities into the home. Thus, teaching techniques such as dialogic reading and conversation between generations have become standard fare in family literacy programs. Edmund Burke Huey had already identified the concept that spoken language is a pre-

cursor to reading as “professional wisdom” as early as 1908 in his publication, the *Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. Today, a synthesis of research by the National Early Literacy Panel has confirmed a correlation between oral language and reading success.

Professional wisdom is created when teachers or administrators successfully test a hypothesis in a real-life setting. Taking the “well that didn’t work” result, then identifying ideas that might work better is, in effect, creating a hypothesis. Testing the hypothesis by applying it in daily program operations will prove it or disprove it. Teachers and administrators do this every day. In fact, this may sound amazingly familiar to action research aficionados.

Professional wisdom and evidence-based education and empirical evidence and educational theory are all needed for sound program management. Readers are encouraged to remember that we work in a young field. It is not possible to find a research basis for all you do in program management. Your evidence-based ideas about program improvement may be the precursor to future research. Professional wisdom has a place in program management, a place that can only be enhanced as the body of research grows to support it. Your professional wisdom, gleaned from peer interaction and experience, are cornerstones in program improvement.

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Letter from the TCALL Director

Spring is always a busy season for Texas adult education and family literacy educators. Particularly in these difficult economic times, local literacy programs are stretching their resources to meet increasing demand for adult basic education and English as a Second Language services.

TCALL is bustling with selection processes underway for two sets of doctoral research fellows. The Barbara Bush Fellows in Family Literacy for the 2009-2010 academic year will be announced at the Houston Celebration of Reading, a major annual fundraising event for The Barbara Bush Texas Fund, on April 23 at Houston's Hobby Center. Applications for 2009-2010 TCALL Fellowships for doctoral research in adult literacy are due on June 15, 2009. Some potential areas of research for TCALL Fellows include transitioning English Language Learners into adult basic or secondary education or postsecondary or vocational training programs; the potential application in Texas of Washington State's I-BEST model (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training), which pairs adult education or English with workforce training; persistence strategies for adult literacy learners – both learner and program strategies; and the relationship between learner retention and successful transition. Fellowships at TCALL are available to doctoral students at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Moving to the national scene, President Obama used his first address to a joint session of Congress in late February to call for every adult in the United States to commit to at least one year of education or training beyond high school and to set as a national goal to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. President Obama said, "This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It's not just quitting on yourself, it's quitting on your country – and this country needs and values the talents of every American."

The White House also recently released data that will assist states and localities as they prepare adult learners with the basic literacy or English skills training that adults will need for jobs being created or saved through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)*. State-by-state estimates of employment impact by Congressional district estimate that Texas should gain or save approximately 269,000 jobs in industries ranging from clean energy to health care, with over 90% in the private sector.

Another prominent theme of the Obama administration is that government decisions should be based on the best-available, scientifically-valid evidence. This issue of ***Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly*** is centered on the theme of **Professional Wisdom**, one of the "three legs of the stool" of evidence-based education, along with empirical evidence and educational theory. Ken Appelt of TCALL contributes an article on page 9 that provides a thorough overview of the concepts entailed in evidence-based educational practice and professional development. In his article on page 11, Federico Salas-Isnardi of TCALL looks at professional wisdom from the teacher's perspective and reviews a variety of electronic resources for sharing and accessing professional wisdom. Beth Thompson, Assistant State Director and State Even Start Coordinator at Texas LEARNS, contributes an article on strategies for program improvement that confirm current professional wisdom developed out of necessity, particularly in the turbulent context of Even Start family literacy programs. See Ms. Thompson's article on page 1. Found on page 13, an article by Michelle Janysek, Mary Helen Martinez, and Emily Miller-Payne of the Texas Adult Education Credential Project demonstrates the potential impact on instructional and programmatic outcomes due to growth in professional wisdom through the Credentialing process.

Other articles in this issue describe the experiences of a teacher-researcher, tips for churches that aim to promote literacy in their communities, and examining the usefulness of GED test results as a predictor of college success. We hope this issue will support Texas literacy educators in their professional growth and successful program practice.

Harriet Vardiman Smith
TCALL Director

35 Ways Your Church Can Promote Adult and Family Literacy in Your Community

by Lester Meriwether

In my role as Coordinator of Literacy ConneXus, I help churches and other religious organizations to develop a literacy outreach program through technical assistance, networking, and training. The roots of Literacy ConneXus go back over 50 years to the development of the Laubach Literacy Center at Baylor in 1957. This Center was started in response to a challenge by President Dwight D. Eisenhower at Baylor's commencement in 1956, and was housed in at least four departments on Baylor's campus until funding dried up in 1968. Through this Center and its innovative first director, Dr. Richard Cortwright, many churches began literacy programs in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Dr. Cortwright used television as an instructional tool as early as 1958.

After a 20-year hiatus, I became first director of the Baptist Literacy Missions Center at Baylor in 1988. This Center continued in one form or another until 2002 when it essentially went dormant. In 2004, I was hired to form Literacy ConneXus with a view toward establishing similar projects on other university campuses. The School of Social Work at Baylor University supports literacy work through its Center for Family and Community Center via materials and networking. Literacy ConneXus is led by a multi-denominational board, although most funding currently comes from Texas Baptist churches.

I would like to share the following suggestions to promote adult and family literacy in your community:

1. Identify and equip an "education advocate" in every congregation.
2. Encourage celebration of educational achievement at every level.
3. Create coalitions with other groups to promote educational issues.
4. Encourage college students to serve as "educational ambassadors" with at-risk families.
5. Provide training opportunities in cultural competency for literacy program leadership.
6. Offer summer intern programs to provide speakers for conferences to address educational opportunities/resources.
7. Support Even Start Family Literacy and Head Start parent involvement and parenting education programs in local communities.
8. Honor teachers and literacy tutors for their work.
9. Encourage youth to enter the teaching profession and to volunteer as tutors.
10. Tap into the desire for biblical literacy to motivate adult participation in literacy programs.
11. Encourage teaching of basic character, civic virtues, and civic involvement.
12. Advocate for health education and health literacy in your community.
13. Support thoughtful reform of public education.
14. Encourage mentoring of at-risk children, youth, and families.
15. Advocate for adequate funding of public education.
16. Advocate for lifelong access to education as a basic human right, rather than an "extra" to fund through alternative revenues such as gambling.
17. Create motivational experiences for adults and children together (family literacy).
18. Support preschool and family literacy projects such as *Books for the Border*.
19. Use your church's library in nontraditional ways.
20. Begin an English as a Second Language ministry.
21. Begin an adult literacy program.
22. Help adults earn their GED.
23. Provide citizenship education.
24. Sponsor computer literacy classes.
25. Host financial literacy instruction.
26. Develop family literacy programs.
27. Provide parenting classes.
28. Affirm churches who are creatively and successfully advocating educational attainment.
29. Develop networks and partnerships among congregations to address educational issues.
30. Assist high school dropouts in re-engaging in school through networks with schools and adult education programs.
31. Encourage dropouts to consider an adult edu-

cation program to prepare for vocational training or further education.

32. Build partnerships between churches and at-risk schools.
33. Build a collaborative partnership with a local adult literacy program that has access to government funds for literacy.
34. Support or begin a Reach Out and Read program in partnership with a local pediatric clinic. (See www.reachoutandread.org)
35. Support local libraries including those in churches and schools.

Above list based on:

Abriendo Puertas! Opening Doors for Hispanic Youth (Report of the Hispanic Education Task Force of the

Baptist General Convention of Texas) and *Public Education and the Church – Resolution #263 – The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church*.

Contact Literacy ConneXus for additional information about this list and how your church can further educate and promote literacy in your community. Or share ways your church is already doing one of these projects – info@literacyconnexus.org.

About the Author:

Lester Meriwether is Executive Director of Literacy ConneXus, Inc., (www.literacyconnexus.org) which is headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas. He can be reached at (817) 696-9898 or via email: Lester@literacyconnexus.org.

Experiences of a Teacher-Researcher

by *Clarena Larrotta*

Not so long ago I used to say that I was an experienced teacher and a novice researcher; now I consider myself a teacher-researcher. Similar to other teachers, during my undergraduate teacher preparation program, I was not taught to believe that I could do research in my classroom. Research was intimidating and a foreign concept. Before graduate school, nobody told me that by revising curriculum, improving my work environment, criticizing my practice, and implementing and testing theory in my classroom, I was doing research. Unfortunately, my experience, like many others, has been that "...neither the on-the-job socializing forces of schooling nor in-service education are committed to the cultivation of the teacher's role as researcher" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 37). The purpose of this essay is to share my learning experiences becoming a teacher-researcher and to encourage other practitioners to do research in their classrooms and to share their findings with others.

I prepare the lessons, and I go to class expecting to see what works well, to do it again, or to improve it if it does not work. We, teachers, know that the lesson plan looks great on paper, but when delivering it in the classroom, unexpected events come up, teachable moments arise, and we are compelled to make decisions on the spot. As teachers, we possess expert

practical knowledge about our classrooms that nobody else does. *Practical knowledge* "encompasses all a teacher does in her setting... includes all that the teacher brings of herself to the moment of teaching—beliefs, attitudes, feelings, reflection, gestures, temperament, and personal history" (Wein, 1995, p. 12). This practical knowledge is of great value when attempting to do classroom-based research or when implementing theory in our classroom. Teachers need to become aware of the expertise they have of their own classroom. They need to establish the connection between the inquiry they do and the essence of doing research.

Conducting teaching-research in your classroom can be intimidating but so is teaching when you first start. It is necessary to learn how to keep calm and in control when things do not go as planned. Use your practical knowledge as a resource when you face a challenge. "...A teacher-researcher can react to unexpected events with immediate changes to the new practice...often his/her reaction *must* be immediate (Loughran, 2002, p. 259), but teachers do this all the time. Experienced teachers plan for the unexpected; they know about the dynamic nature of the classroom (e.g., students' motivation changes, technology fails,

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attendance is low, or they need to substitute for another instructor). Teacher-research focuses on problems identified by teachers, and it provides a means of enabling teachers to reflect on their own practice (Ellis, 1997). However, doing research goes beyond reflecting on one's teaching practice. It is important to have a plan, collect data, analyze and report findings; it is a process.

Find a focus for doing research. What is your passion? What intrigues you? What problem or question do you see as important to resolve? Usually, when teachers investigate their practice, they want to implement some change, or they want to improve a particular aspect of their teaching. For example, in the intermediate ESL (English as a second language) class I was teaching at an adult literacy center in Central Texas, I realized that there was a lack of emphasis on the development of writing. In general, the writing the students did was short sentences and fill in the blank exercises. I wanted to provide them with the opportunity to experiment with the written language and to write for authentic communication. This was my motivation to implement dialogue journals (DJ). However, I did not have experience implementing DJ, and I realized that other ESL instructors could benefit if I documented this experience. I collected data, analyzed the students' response to implementing the DJ, and then shared my findings by publishing them (See Larrotta, 2008).

Educators and researchers are constantly pointing out the need to establish the connection between theory and practice; this is precisely what teaching research is about. In teaching research, teachers use their *practical knowledge* about the setting, the

community, the students' learning needs, identities, and culture in order to make theory work. Finally, it is important to point out that effective teacher-researchers make time to read the research that has already been done in their area of interest, and they learn from other researchers' experiences. Teaching research makes more sense when we consult our colleagues and share the results of our research efforts with them. Personally, I will continue conducting classroom-based research because teaching makes more sense that way. Reflecting on one's teaching practice becomes an essential part of one's daily routine as a teacher-researcher. Sharing your findings about the inquiries you pursue is equally important.

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About the Author

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About the Author

Elizabeth "Beth" Thompson is an Assistant Director at Texas LEARNS where her primary responsibility is to serve as the State Coordinator of Even Start and Family Literacy. She has a B.S and an M.S. from Louisiana State University. Beth and her husband Jim have two children and reside in Katy, Texas.

Professional Wisdom and GED Completer College-Readiness

by Dr. David Joost

As the demand for a more educated workforce escalates, completers of the General Education Development (GED) examinations increasingly access higher education and postsecondary training opportunities through community colleges. Like other nontraditional students, GED completers often do not have the academic skills necessary to successfully persist and complete either a college degree or an occupational certificate. While GED completers clearly have the expectation, and professional wisdom suggests, that their credential can prepare them for college entry, a review of the literature reveals no research-based studies that discuss whether or not the current version of the GED can be used for determining college-readiness.

The purpose of the GED, according to the GED Testing Service, is to measure the major academic skills and knowledge associated with a high school program of study. When preparing students who wish to attend college, teachers of adult education classes across Texas and elsewhere, lack empirical data upon which to base their practice and resultantly must lean exclusively on professional wisdom. They have little choice but to base their practice on the belief that since the GED credential is roughly equivalent to a high school diploma, doing well at some level on the GED can indicate a student is prepared for college entry. To develop further insights into what college-readiness means for their students, they likely look to their own college experiences, refer to local college core curricula, and build on the past outcomes of their students who have entered and attempted to succeed in the college environment.

In Texas, college-readiness is clearly defined. Our state legislature's *Texas Success Initiative* establishes certain standard assessment benchmarks that students must achieve to be considered college-ready. For instance, a student must score at least 81 out of a possible 99 on the ACT Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) Reading Placement Test to be considered college-ready in the learning domain of Reading. In Mathematics, a student must score at least 71 out of a

possible score of 99 on the COMPASS Algebra Test. There are no equivalent GED scores that are accepted for college-readiness at any Texas community colleges or other postsecondary institutions.

To explore how GED scores might be predictive and to derive a sense of what GED scores might indicate college-readiness in the domains of Reading and Mathematics, a study was conducted using data from completers of the current version of the GED who were enrolled at Houston Community College in semester credit hour college classes during the 2006 calendar year. While the results of the study should be generalized only with some caution, they do add to the field's sense of what constitutes college-readiness for GED completers. In addition, the results provide the beginnings of a base of research against which professional wisdom on the topic can be compared. The research referenced in the remainder of this article is derived from a study conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation regarding the usefulness of the current version of the GED as an indicator of college-readiness. The full study and its results can be seen at viking.coe.uh.edu/~djoost/Dissertation/Joost%20Dissertation%20FINAL.doc.

Statistical analysis of the scores of the two tests confirm that GED scores are positively linked to COMPASS Test scores at a significant level. This means that under the study's conditions, GED scores can meaningfully predict COMPASS scores with some measure of reliability. This finding confirms the intuition of Adult Education teachers who believe that a student's score on the GED can be predictive of whether or not that student is ready to succeed in college. Accepting that GED scores are meaningfully linked of COMPASS scores and therefore can provide a sense of a student's college-readiness, the next question logically becomes, "What GED scores concord to the COMPASS Tests' college-readiness scores?"

Using an equipercentile ranking methodology, the study determined that a score of 540 on the GED

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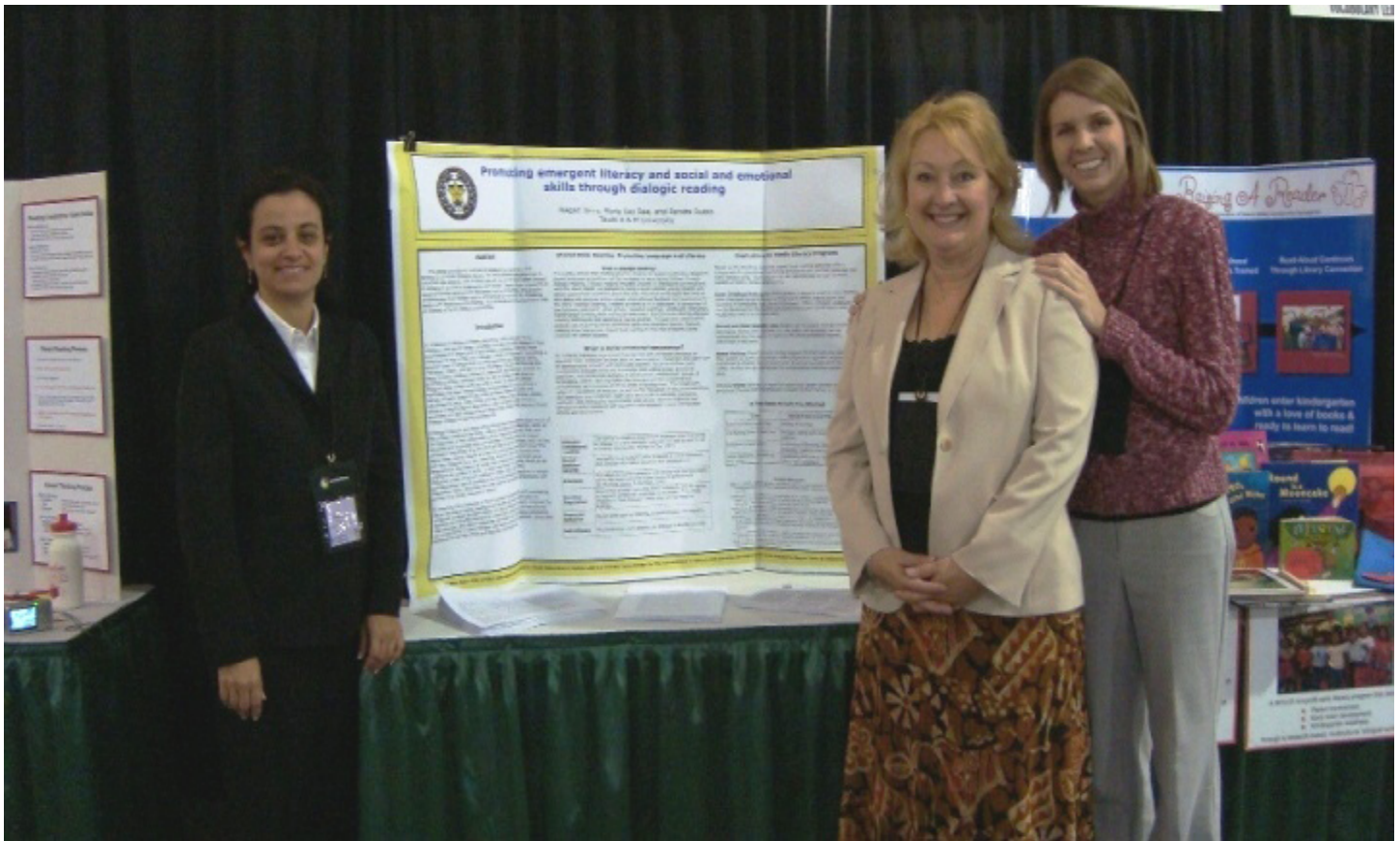
Reading Test concurred to a COMPASS Reading Placement Test's college-readiness score of 71. However, in the domain of Mathematics, the equipercentile ranking procedure determined that a nearly perfect score of 790 was required on the GED Mathematics Test for a student to be considered college-ready. In fact, some of the 91 subjects in the sample had achieved perfect GED scores of 800 and were still unable to meet the college-readiness benchmark score set for the COMPASS Algebra Placement Test.

The findings of the study confirm existing professional wisdom in one sense, being that there is a GED Reading Test score that, when achieved by a student suggests the student is adequately prepared to successfully persist in college-level course work. However, the findings in the domain of Mathematics suggest that even a perfect score of 800 on the GED may not assure a student of being college-ready. This finding suggests that if adult education curricula are to be aligned with higher education curricula, there is

clearly a gap that must be considered in the domain of Mathematics. To address this gap, we again look to the professional wisdom of skilled, experienced, and trained teachers to determine how to adapt college-core mathematics curricula to meet the needs of Adult Education students who desire to enroll in college. As in the instance, just described, it is not uncommon for research to follow and confirm professional wisdom and practice, in fact for the field of education it is the rule more than it is the exception.

About the Author

Dr. David Joost is the Director of Adult Education Programs at Houston Community College, the state's largest provider of adult education. This article draws significantly from his November 2008 dissertation, *Comparing the General Education Development (GED) Tests to the ACT Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) Tests for Usefulness as Predictors for College-readiness.*



Barbara Bush Doctoral Research Fellows Renata Russo, Marla Rea, and Megan Terry presented a poster session, *Promoting Emergent Literacy and Social and Emotional Skills Through Dialogic Reading*, at the 2009 National Conference on Family Literacy in Orlando, Florida.

Evidence-Based Practice: Empirical Evidence Guided by Professional Wisdom

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Professional Development Specialist

Empirical evidence, scientifically-based research, evidence-based practice, and professional wisdom are terms that everyone in the field of education has been trying to grasp since the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was passed in 2001. One guiding principle of the NCLB Act directs educators to use evidence-based practice -- instructional methods that are supported by rigorous scientific research so that students will make the best possible progress. What exactly does this mean for teachers and administrators? Where do educators find this research? How do educators know that it is valid and reliable? How do educators create instructional practices that are evidence-based?

The NCLB Act defined **scientifically-based research** as “. . . research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.” It goes on to say the research should be empirical and peer-reviewed, and should rely on “multiple measures and observations, preferably through experimental or quasi-experimental methods.”

These research methods are routinely used in agricultural and medical research where subjects can be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, and where other things that may influence the result can be controlled; however, these research methods are difficult to apply in educational settings. When the Department of Education closely examined the available educational research studies, they found that only a small percent of the existing studies could be considered “rigorous” in design and application.

In October of 2002, Grover Whitehurst, Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, gave educators a definition of evidence-based practice during a speech to the Student Achievement and School Accountability Conference. Whitehurst said that **Evidence-based Practice** is “*the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction.*” Since then, educators have used this definition to guide their work in establishing evidence-based practice in their

programs, schools, and classrooms.

Whitehurst also clarified some terms within this definition:

Empirical Evidence 1) *Scientifically-based research from fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience, and especially from research in educational settings.* Research findings from many fields have relevance for educators’ classroom practice: studies of human behavior, how people learn, how people are motivated, how emotions influence learning, or how the brain grows and matures across age. 2) *Empirical data on performance used to compare, evaluate, and monitor progress.* Texas adult educators are fortunate to have the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS). This Web-enabled adult education student tracking and reporting system can provide many useful reports on student progress for both administrators and classroom teachers.

Professional Wisdom 1) *The judgment that individuals acquire through experience.* Of course we get better with practice; we take note of what works and what does not. When we engage in reflective practice, the wisdom of our experience grows even faster. 2) *Consensus views.* These are principles and practices that are widely agreed upon by experienced and knowledgeable practitioners in the field. 3) *Increased professional wisdom is reflected in numerous ways, including the effective identification and incorporation of local circumstances into instruction.* Educational approaches will always need to be adapted to the changing classroom environment; a great lesson at one place and one time can be a failure elsewhere, what works for one student may not work for another. Teachers must consider the students’ goals, the available materials, and the instructional levels of the students in the classroom.

Both Professional Wisdom and Empirical Evidence are needed. *Without professional wisdom* educators cannot consider local circumstances and make neces-

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sary changes. In areas where there is no solid empirical evidence, professional wisdom guides us toward intelligent choices.

Without empirical evidence education cannot hope to resolve competing approaches or generate cumulative knowledge. Educators might then fall prey to personal bias or follow the latest fad without regard to the effectiveness of the approach.

Smith, Bingman, & Beall (2007) make several suggestions for helping practitioners move toward evidence-based practice by using research. *Program directors* can share research resources with teachers and encourage teachers to seek research information that could help instructional practices in the program. They can also model how to access, understand, evaluate, and use research and collaborate with teachers on the use of research to improve student outcomes. *Teachers* can read adult education journals and share and discuss relevant articles with colleagues. Teachers can conduct practitioner research and share with others in their program or state. They can also suggest or help lead a book study or a Study Circle on a topic of interest to the program.

State Leadership and professional development groups can highlight important research and its relevance to practice. They can keep research at the forefront of professional development and program improvement goals. They can encourage practitioners statewide to use their Professional Wisdom to adapt and apply research findings in their local programs.

When something works well, programs can be encouraged to share their success with the rest of the state.

Resources

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ESL Beginning Literacy Train-the-Trainer Tuesday July 14, 2009 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Salado, Texas

Is your program having a tough time meeting learner performance measures for the ESL Beginning Literacy level? You are not alone. The ESL Beginning Literacy Train-the-Trainer targets GREAT Center trainers and local program ESL trainers, specialists, and coordinators on the use of the Texas ESL Beginning Literacy Training Module, developed by Texas LEARNS in collaboration with the CAELA (Center for Adult English Language Acquisition) Network. www.cal.org/caelanetwork/

The Module provides instructors with techniques and strategies to improve the retention and performance of learners in the lowest level of ESL based on the best available research and local practices. After completing the training, participants will be ready to conduct professional development activities for teachers in the local programs.

For more information on the ESL Beginning Literacy Train-the-Trainer event, contact Ken Appelt at TCALL (kappelt@tamu.edu).

Professional Wisdom: Just What Is It? How Do I Access It and How Do I Judge It?

by Federico Salas-Isnardi, TCALL Adult Literacy Specialist

I am sure that, as an experienced English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor, at one time or another you have made a decision about what to teach to a group of ESL students based on your experience, your sense of what works and does not in your class, or simply because you “know” your students better than the administrators, the state, or the federal government. You benefit from the wisdom you have gained through experience. You may have explained that decision to your colleagues or administrators saying something along the lines of: “I based my decision on my professional wisdom.” A colleague in another community, with just as many years of experience as you have and facing a similar situation, may have made a different decision and also claimed that it was based on their professional wisdom.

Now, I am a third teacher; I am new to adult education, inexperienced, and in desperate need of some wisdom. Whom do I believe? Do I listen to you? Do I trust our colleague elsewhere who would have taught a very different lesson based on her own experience and comfort level? How come both of you claim your actions in the classroom are based on professional wisdom if your wisdom is different? Just what is professional wisdom? How do I judge which “wisdom” to apply to my circumstances?

The definition most commonly used today is G. Whitehurst’s (See Ken Appelt’s article on page 9) and it has been adopted by the U.S. Education Department. According to this definition, Professional Wisdom is:

- The judgment that individuals acquire through experience
- Consensus views
- Increased professional wisdom is reflected in numerous ways, including the effective identification and incorporation of local circumstances into instruction

www.ed.gov/nclb/methods/whatworks/eb/edlite-slide004.html

Each of us acquires different experiences throughout the course of our professional lives. In addition, each

professional will have a different perspective or understanding even of the same experience based on our own personal views, philosophy, and knowledge. That is why our personal judgment alone cannot constitute professional wisdom. We must arrive at a consensus upon the careful consideration of the views of many professionals and respected colleagues. This consensus view takes into account local circumstances to adapt instruction to specific contexts.

Dr. John Comings, former director of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, in a 2007 online discussion of professional wisdom (wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Professional_Wisdom), talks about consensus and suggests that professional wisdom should be judged by a peer review process in much the same way as research is reviewed. He maintains that a jury of peers evaluating professional wisdom should include practitioners and researchers. He suggests that the best way to share professional wisdom among colleagues is through online resources that not only allow access to the wisdom shared but also include a review by peers and a synthesis of the research and wisdom.

What follows is a brief list of such electronic resources for sharing and accessing professional wisdom. The list is extremely limited but it contains some very useful sites that should be a good start for any teacher, new or experienced.

ALE Wiki

The ALE Wiki is probably the first resource adult educators should familiarize themselves with. Created by Dr. David Rosen and maintained by a number of professionals who actively contribute content and expertise, the Literacy Wiki is a significant source of Professional Wisdom. Anyone can access the wiki but in order to add your own content or edit topics, you have to create an account, log in and introduce yourself to the community. These steps keep people who are not professionals in the field from adding irrelevant material. If you are not familiar with the ALE Wiki, take some time to familiarize yourself. The resources are extremely helpful.

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Evidence-Based Education and Professional Wisdom are two of the many topics.

wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Evidence_Based_Adult_Education_and

wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Professional_Wisdom_and_Research_Resources

If you are an ESL teacher, you will want to visit the ESOL page at

wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/English_for_Speakers_of_Other_Languages

Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA)

www.cal.org/caela

The CAELA Network is a project of the Center for Applied Linguistics, funded by the U.S. Education Department. This center's website includes resources for ESL practitioners and researchers including bibliographies, books, briefs, reports, and a searchable database of ESL resources available at:

www.cal.org/CALWebDB/CAELATracker/CAELAList.aspx

The research section includes a wealth of statistical information on ESL measures that should be very helpful to anyone doing research.

California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO)

www.calpro-online.org

One of the premier professional development projects in the nation, CALPRO offers an immense wealth of resources to teachers and other professionals including publications, research digests, and resource guides. *A New ESL Teacher Resource Guide* helps teachers, new and experienced, to navigate the ESL classroom. It includes tips to integrate workplace basics into your ESL class.

www.calpro-online.org/o_guides/esl_res_og/1.asp

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)

Arguably, NCSALL is not a source of Professional Wisdom but rather the depository of the most serious research conducted in our field in the last ten years. The funding for this research center ended in 2007 but the resources are still available at

www.ncsall.net/

Visit this site to access some of the most influential research done in our field in the recent past, including the Equipped for the Future Study. Download articles from the quarterly publication *Focus on Basics* or from the *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*. There are teaching resource guides and a section on connecting practice, policy and research.

National Research and Development Center (NRDC) for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

Another wonderful resource, this one from the United Kingdom, the NRDC lists as one of its objectives to 'build research capacity, reflective practice and career development through the systematic engagement of teachers and other practitioners in the centre.'

www.nrdc.org.uk/

Visit the page of Practitioner Resources where you will find a wealth of reports and practitioner resources such as guides and handbooks.

www.nrdc.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=502

Downloading full reports is free to teachers courtesy of the NRDC in London. If you press the tab for the Practitioner-Led Research Initiative you will be able to download a short report on the impact of teacher led research.

**Don't miss
the FREE
resources
on page 20!**

The Texas Adult Education Credential: Improving Instructional and Programmatic Outcomes Through the Use of Professional Development and Critical Self-Reflection

by Michelle Janysek, Mary Helen Martinez, and Emily Miller-Payne

Each year, approximately three million adults enroll in adult education programs. These programs benefit adult learners by providing them with valuable labor market skills as well as two of the most basic prerequisites for postsecondary education, high school equivalency and English language literacy (Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2005). Participants in adult education also have better health, higher incomes, and greater civic participation than nonparticipants with similar backgrounds (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005).

Given these outcomes and the economic benefits of more skilled labor markets, policymakers have been encouraged recently to increase investments in high quality adult education programs (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005). As with K-12 and postsecondary education systems, improvements to adult education programs have focused on establishing standards for program activities and student preparedness for work and postsecondary education. Adult education providers are also now expected to offer accelerated learning opportunities so participants will be more likely to complete programs, and to integrate educational programs with social services and job or postsecondary placement (Porter, Cuban, Comings, & Chase, 2005; Southern Regional Education Board; Wrigley, Richer, Martinson, & Strawn, 2003). Some adult education advocates have also called for integrating programs more thoroughly into postsecondary institutions and increasing the status of adult education instructors and administrators by making compensation, training, and expectations more similar to those of postsecondary faculty (Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2005).

These goals and activities require skilled oversight by administrators who are knowledgeable about the needs of adult learners, effective program management, and adult education curriculum and instruction. Also necessary are teachers who possess the knowledge and skills to facilitate adult learning.

Formal training and credentialing can facilitate these goals by establishing high standards for adult education instructors and administrators and increasing the status and resources of adult education programs. To this end, the Texas Adult Education Credential Project was established in 1998 in response to calls from the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE) and the field to develop professional credentials for adult educators. The project receives funding from the Texas Education Agency through Texas LEARNS and is operated by The Education Institute at Texas State University-San Marcos. The goal of the project is to develop a professional workforce of adult educators able to connect adult education theory and practice to enhance student success.

The Texas Adult Education Credential Project offers two separate credentials -- a teacher credential and an administrator credential. The Teacher Credential was fully implemented in 2004; the Administrator Credential was implemented in 2008. The establishment of professional credentials for adult education practitioners is one of the most innovative projects in adult education in the nation. Adult educators in general are typically not required to hold specialized licenses or professional credentials. Only five states, Connecticut, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, and West Virginia, along with the District of Columbia, offer licenses in adult education that are required for instructors. Ten other states require adult education teachers to hold valid K-12 teaching licenses. Only Texas currently offers licenses or credentials for adult education administrators.

The Teacher Credential Model emphasizes the link between current theory in adult education and professional practice. Originally intended as a move toward accountability, the teacher credential demonstrates that teachers have participated in meaningful professional development activities which represent a core

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body of knowledge and skills needed to foster learning in the adult education classroom.

Teachers submit an Electronic Portfolio as evidence that they have obtained and applied the knowledge and skills necessary to improve instructional outcomes. Teachers complete professional development activities that focus on six core content areas, implement the newly obtained knowledge and/or skills in their classrooms, and provide a written reflection detailing the outcomes of implementation thus linking theory to practice. The six core content areas of the Teacher Credential were originally aligned with the Texas Adult Education Instructor Proficiencies and Indicators of Program Quality as well as research in the field of adult education.

The Administrator Credential Model emphasizes the value of experience and encourages the use of collaborative learning communities and mentor relationships. The administrator credentialing process provides an opportunity for novice administrators and administrators employed in less comprehensive roles such as instructional coordinator to obtain a variety of experiences intended to prepare them for increased responsibility and continued career growth and serves as a tool for program improvement. Experienced administrators may obtain a new perspective and understanding of their role through introspection and reflective practice.

As with the Teacher Credential, administrators also submit an Electronic Portfolio which consists of six common products. The Electronic Portfolio is the means by which administrators demonstrate that they possess the knowledge and skills detailed in the Administrator Credential Content Framework. The Content Framework was developed by Texas administrators and specifies the knowledge and skills that administrators in the state of Texas have determined to be necessary in order to perform the role of administrator.

Both the Teacher Credential and the Administrator Credential value the experiences of the individual educator while providing the opportunity to tie theory to practice thus allowing for the development of strong adult education programs which ultimately result in improved student success.

References

Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. (2005). *To ensure America's future: Building a national opportunity system for adults. Strengthening links between adult education and community colleges*. New York: NY.

Porter, K. E., Cuban, S., Comings, J. P., & Chase, V. (2005). *"One day I will make it": A study of adult student persistence in library literacy programs*. New York: MDRC.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2005). *Investing wisely in adult learning is key to state prosperity*. Atlanta, GA.

Wrigley, H. S., Richer, E., Martinson, K., & Strawn, J. (2003). *The language of opportunity: Expanding employment prospects for adults with limited English skills*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy.

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A comment about last year's conference:

"Please pass along our thanks and appreciation to all the Literacy Texas staff and volunteers who worked on the conference. It was the best ever! We talked about things that hit our 'HOT' buttons all the way home and shared some thoughts with our Board. We are looking forward to next year's conference."

Linda Ricketts, LVA-Montgomery County



Reading is **BIG** in Texas



Welcome to Our Library. . .

When I need state or federal information on adult education issues, the first place I turn to is TCALL. TCALL is my central clearinghouse for adult education research, commercial materials evaluation and insight into current trends that have critical implications on what and how I prepare adults for an uncertain future. I am a fervent TCALL supporter and appreciate the vital services it provides to all adult education professionals. TCALL is a treasure to Texas adult education!

Bob Quillin, Director
Angelina College Adult Education



Evidence-Based Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language Education

10 Best Teaching Practices: How Brain Research, Learning Styles, and Standards Define Teaching Competencies, Second Edition. Tileston, Donna Walker (2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. In this book, the author offers a practical guide to inspiring, motivating, and therefore educating even the most unenthusiastic students. Tileston details the fundamentals of differentiated teaching strategies, teaching for long-term memory, collaborative learning, higher-order thinking skills, technology integration, evaluating learning through authentic assessments, and making the connection from prior learning and experiences to new learning. Examples illustrate how each teaching practice can be employed.

99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners with The SIOP Model. Vogt, Mary Ellen and Echevarria, Jana (2008). Boston, MA: Pearson.

The SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model is a research-based approach to sheltered instruction that has proven effective in addressing the academic needs of English language learners. The model consists of eight components: lesson preparation; building background; comprehensible input; strategies; interaction; practice/application; lesson delivery; and review/assessment. The 99 ideas and activities in this book include a few familiar techniques, as well as many new ideas for SIOP teachers. All promote student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction and involvement proven to be so necessary for English language acquisition and content development.

Adult Education in America: A First Look at Results from the Adult Education Program and Learner Surveys. Tamassia, Claudia and Lennon, Marylou and Yamamoto, Kentaro and Kirsch, Irwin (2007).

Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, this report describes a study that included a Program Survey covering the program year from July 2001 through June 2002, and a Learner Survey done from March through

June of 2003. The Program Survey described adult education programs governed by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Programs are describe in terms of their characteristics (size, number of sites, number of participants, budget, institutional characteristics); types of learners and support systems offered; staff characteristics and qualifications; types of assessments employed and their use; and extent and purposes of technology usage. The Learner Survey was designed to profile a nationally representative sample of adult learners enrolled in adult education programs. Information was gathered on language background; educational background and experiences; labor force participation and other activities; and general demographic information. Chapter 4 compares literacy skills of English- and Spanish-speaking Hispanic adult learners.

Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results Bosworth, Brian, et al (March 2007). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. This report synthesizes the research literature on the challenges facing adult learners in higher education today and on emerging strategies for increasing the number of adults over 24 who earn college credentials and degrees. A key finding is that traditional higher education programs and policies—created in an era when the 18- to 22-year-old, dependent, full-time student coming right out of high school was seen as the core market for higher education—are not well-designed for the needs of adult learners, most of whom are “employees who study” rather than “students who work.” The report identifies the primary obstacles that adult learners face in trying to earn credentials with labor market value. It reviews the research on innovative practices that address the particular constraints facing adult learners. And it recommends changes in institutional and governmental policies that might help more adults enroll in, persist in, and complete higher education credential programs.

English Learners: Reaching the Highest Level of English Literacy. Gilbert G. Garcia (2003). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Teacher educators and school administrators will find this new

HOW DOES THIS MAIL ORDER LENDING LIBRARY WORK?

Books and other resources described in the Library section may be requested for a 30-day loan. We will mail each borrower up to five loan items at a time (just two for first-time borrowers), and even include a postage-paid return address sticker for mailing them back to us! Borrowers must be affiliated with a non-profit program providing adult or family literacy services. Annotated bibliographies of our entire library of resources are available in hard copy by request, and the library can also be searched in 'real time' on our website (www.tcall.tamu.edu). Call 800-441-7323 or email tcall@tamu.edu to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

volume to be a valuable resource for meeting the complex literacy needs of the burgeoning English language learner (ELL) population. The collection examines three important ELL issues: English reading instruction in an immersion setting, English language development, and cultural issues as they pertain to English learners in and out of the classroom. You'll discover new ways of looking at practice in the context of current English literacy instruction for English learners, suggestions for why we need to examine our current practice, and recommendations for what we can do to change it. Most important, English Learners emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage and celebrates the variety of voices that our English learners represent.

Take on the Challenge: A Source Book from the Women, Violence, and Adult Education Project.

Morrish, Elizabeth and Horsman, Jenny and Hofer, Judy (2002). Boston, MA: World Education. This resource for educators and activists interested in anti-violence work, provides an analysis of the effects of violence and a practical collection of ideas and activities, with examples from teachers working in GED, native language literacy, ABE, ESOL, welfare-to-work, corrections, and shelter settings. Educators successfully changed their curriculum and learning environment to address impacts of violence on learning. Based on the foundation of Jenny Horsman's research, practitioners focused on well-being and incorporated counseling and creative arts into the classroom. Each chapter includes a general introduction, tools for programs, and teachers writing about the changes they made.

Tools for Teaching Content Literacy. Allen, Janet (2004). Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. Reading and writing across content areas is emphasized in this compact tabbed flipchart book designed as a ready reference for content reading and writing instruction. Each of thirty-three instructional strategies includes: a brief description and purpose for each strategy; a research base that documents the origin and effectiveness of the strategy; graphic organizers to support the lesson; and classroom vignettes from different grade levels and content areas to illustrate the strategy in use. The definitions, descriptions, and research sources

also provide a quick reference when implementing state and national standards, designing assessments, writing grants, or evaluating resources for literacy instruction.

Using Research and Reason in Education: How Teachers Can Use Scientifically-Based Research to Make Curricular and Instructional Decisions.

Stanovich, Paula J. and Stanovich, Keith E. (May 2003). Washington, DC: The Partnership for Reading. In the recent move toward standards-based reform in public education, many educational reform efforts require schools to demonstrate that they are achieving educational outcomes with students performing at a required level of achievement. Standards-based reform has many curricular and instructional prerequisites. The curriculum must represent the most important knowledge, skills, and attributes that schools want their students to acquire because these learning outcomes will serve as the basis of assessment instruments. Likewise, instructional methods should be appropriate for the designed curriculum. Teaching methods should lead to students learning the outcomes that are the focus of the assessment standards. As professionals, teachers can become more effective and powerful by developing the skills to recognize scientifically based practice and, when the evidence is not available, use some basic research concepts to draw conclusions on their own. This paper offers a primer for those skills that will allow teachers to become independent evaluators of educational research.

What Successful Mentors Do: 81 Research-Based Strategies for New Teacher Induction, Training, and Support.

Hicks, Cathy D. and Glasgow, Neal A. and McNary, Sarah J. (2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. New teachers encounter many "firsts" -- such as first-day jitters, the first performance review, and establishing relationships with new colleagues. The authors offer strategies to help mentors enable new teachers to put those "firsts" in perspective. Strategies are suggested in 10 essential areas of teaching, from using assessment tools to developing a personal teaching style -- all with the goal of increasing retention of new teachers.

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Evidence-Based Family Literacy Education

Building the Reading Brain, PreK-3. Wolfe, Patricia and Nevills, Pamela (2004). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Research indicates that a student's future academic success can be predicted by his or her reading level at the end of third grade. Wolfe and Nevills bring insight and assistance to preschool educators, parents and care providers, kindergarten and primary grade teachers for this essential process. They explain the development of the young brain, the acquisition of language as preparation for reading, and the nurturing and instruction process from birth to age eight. This guide demonstrates how the brain of a child masters the reading process of decoding print and reading with fluency and comprehension and addresses related literacy skills of writing and spelling, and offers brain-friendly strategies that lay the groundwork for reading success including: activities to support phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency; applications of games, music, play, and instruction; and intervention suggestions for children who are challenged or discouraged early readers.

Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Understanding, Preventing, and Responding Effectively Kaiser, Barbara and Rasminsky, Judy Sklar (2003). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. Based on a NAEYC booklet, this book investigates challenging behaviors in-depth and with reference to related research. Chapter topics include: what is challenging behavior; risk factors; protective factors; the brain and behavior; understanding culture; physical space; program; social context; guidance and punishment; strategies; functional assessment; families and outside help; and bullying. This resource could be used in professional development discussions.

Children's Literacy Development: Making It Happen through School, Family, and Community Involvement. Patricia A. Edwards (2004). Boston, MA: Pearson Education. Patricia Edwards has carefully selected skills, strategies, and examples of family involvement that will empower educators to successfully implement family involvement initiatives. A timely publication on today's political climate with federal monies going into family literacy, Edwards has chosen research-based, school-tested ideas as the focus of this book.

Everyday Goodbyes Starting School and Early Care: A Guide to the Separation Process. Balaban, Nancy (2006). Amsterdam Ave, NY: Teachers College

Press. In *Everyday Goodbyes* (her follow-up to *Starting School: From Separation to Independence*), Nancy Balaban once again addresses this critical aspect of child development. Emphasizing the need for parents and teachers to work together in phasing children into a child care, preschool, or kindergarten program, she offers many sensitive, practical suggestions to ease the separation process for all involved. This book helps teachers and parents to understand why children take time to adjust, uses photographs and real-life anecdotes of children, teachers, and parents to illustrate all aspects of the adjustment process, includes activities for the classroom that support children's movement toward independence and self-confidence, includes children with special needs, those who come from special circumstances, as well as the range of cultural differences, and provides sample "phase-in" schedules for planning the first days of a program, a sample letter of introduction that can be sent to parents, and a list of books for children and adults.

Ladders to Literacy: A Preschool Activity Book, Second Edition. Notari-Syverson, Angela and O'Connor, Rollanda E. and Vadasy, Patricia F. (2007). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing. This field-tested, activity-based program gives preschool teachers more than 60 culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate student activities organized into three sections: print/book awareness, metalinguistic awareness skills, and oral language skills. Features include field-tested games, crafts, role plays, and other activities to improve children's basic preliteracy skills. New features in this edition include: well-defined links between the activities and Head Start Recommended Outcomes; a scope-and-sequence chart; 11 new activities; dozens of activities to strengthen the home-school link, including photocopyable handouts to give parents for home activities; and modifications for children with disabilities.

Learning About Print in Preschool: Working With Letters, Words, and Beginning Links With Phonemic Awareness. Strickland, Dorothy S. and Schickendanz, Judith A. (2004). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. From the International Reading Association's Preschool Literacy Collection, this book looks at the research-based key predictors of literacy success and outlines a curriculum and program to achieve a good early literacy foundation. Chapters include the following: what do young children need to know about print, connecting child development and print, a print-rich environment, skills and strategies, phonemic awareness, and alphabet knowledge. The book has charts, checklists, and illustrations.

Literacy and Young Children: Research-Based Practices. Barone, Diane M. and Morrow, Lesley Mandel, Editors (2003). New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Sections include: "Foundations for Early Literacy Learning and Instruction"; "Home Literacy Experiences of Children"; "Phonemic Awareness, Code Learning, and Book Acting"; and "Recent Trends in Literacy Research: Technology, Fluency, and Information Text". Topics discussed range from English language learners, preschool strategies, learning to read, to reading for learning. Barone concludes the book with a cautionary tale of not throwing out practices that work, and suggestions on how to implement new ideas.

Many Pathways to Literacy: Young Children Learning with Siblings, Grandparents, Peers and Communities. Gregory, Eve and Long, Susi and Volk, Dinah, Editors (2004). New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer. This book is a compilation of studies conducted in a variety of cross-cultural contexts where children learn language and literacy with siblings, grandparents, peers and community members. Focusing on the knowledge and skills of children often invisible to educators, the studies highlight how children skillfully draw from their varied cultural and linguistic worlds to make sense of new experiences. Through studies grounded in home, school, community school, nursery and church settings, the studies show how children create for themselves radical forms of teaching and learning in ways that are not typically recognized, understood or valued in schools.

Nurturing the Nurturers: The Importance of Sound Relationships in Early Childhood Intervention. Benard, Bonnie and Quiett, Douglas (2003). San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Report describes the Marin City Families First early intervention model. The model illustrates the difficulties for the home visitor and the issues working a low-income family facing high stress situations. Challenges include financial uncertainty, abuse, inadequate education, and an atmosphere of depression and hopelessness. Report discusses the support from the program needed to be an effective home visitor and the collaborative work needed to move a family forward. Report could be used for discussion and reflection in professional development.

Scaffolding with Storybooks: A Guide for Enhancing Young Children's Language and Literacy Achievement. Justice, Laura M. and Pence, Khara L. and Beckman, Angela R. and Skibbe, Lori E. and Wiggins, Allice K. (2005). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Storybook reading can be used to build the early literacy competencies that preschool,

kindergarten, and first-grade students need to become successful readers and learners. This research-based guide provides strategies and sample interactions that will help to strengthen children's knowledge of written language, vocabulary, phonology, the alphabet, narrative discourse, and the world around them.

The Social World of Children Learning to Talk. Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd R. (2002). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing. This is the second book based on the longitudinal research of the authors, Hart and Risley. (The first book "Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children") This book further explores the implications of the research, with chapters including: the social dance of American family life; a social world; developmental change; staying and playing; the range among well-functioning families; meaningful differences; and talking as a social dance. From the preface: "Children get better at what they practice, and having more language tools, more nuances, more fluency, more steps in the social dances of life is likely to contribute at least as much to your children's future success as their heredity and their choice of friends."

The Temperament Perspective: Working with Children's Behavioral Styles. Kristal, Jan (2005). New York, NY: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co. This book adds the author's own research and clinical work to present practical guidance for working with children and their parents. What is temperament, how does it affect children's behavior at different ages, how can teachers and caregivers adapt the learning environment to help children, and meeting the challenges of difficult behavior are among the topics discussed. Chapters include "Goodness of Fit," "The Temperament Profile," "Infants: Unique from the Beginning," "Toddlers and Preschoolers," and "School-Age Children." The appendix has resource listings for more information about temperament. The book is a resource for all areas and components of family literacy programs.

Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life. Lareau, Annette (2003). Berkeley, California: University of California Press. How does social class affect children's lives? This book describes the author's ethnographic study of two approaches to childrearing: "concerted cultivation" and the "accomplishment of natural growth." Chapters include "social structure and daily life," "the hectic pace of concerted cultivation," "children's play is for children," "language as a conduit for social life," "concerted cultivation in organizational spheres," and "the power and limits of social class."



"The depth of the resources you make available to us and the ease of access are impressive. Thanks."

Resa Wingfield
Grant Coordinator and Supervisor
Tyler Junior College/Literacy Council of Texas

Things to Send For. . .

Evidence-Based Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language Education

Adult Learning in Cohort Groups. Imel, Susan (2002). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Learning in groups has historical roots in adult education and many adult educators use group learning as an element of their programs. This ERIC Practice Application Brief highlights findings from research and theory on adult learning cohorts to examine how cohorts are structured or formed and the experience of the learning process within cohorts. Recommendations for practice are provided.

English Literacy and Civics Education. Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (February 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief, written by CAELA staff members, explains the purpose and content of the U.S. Department of Education's English Literacy and Civics (EL/Civics) Education program. The brief also describes some ways that teachers can develop EL/Civics classes appropriate for learners at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

Implications of NCSALL Research for Program Administrators: NCSALL Seminar Guide. NCSALL (April 2006). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Seminar Guide was created to assist program administrators in accessing, understanding, judging, and using research for themselves and for their staff. Participants explore the "Program Administrators' Sourcebook: A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators" and other training materials available from NCSALL. Professional developers may want to use this seminar in place of a regularly scheduled meeting, such as a statewide training. Seminar design assumes a 3-1/2 hour seminar for between 15 and 25 adult

education program administrators/coordinators.

Intergenerational Learning and Social Capital. Kerka, Sandra (2003). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Knowledge has been transmitted from one generation to another throughout history, often informally or incidentally. In the last 40 years, more systematic and formal intergenerational programs have arisen, with growing recognition of their integral relationship to lifelong learning and broader social purposes (Hanks and Icenogle 2001). Ideally, the generations derive mutual benefits from participation and the learning is reciprocal. Features of effective intergenerational learning have commonalities with the characteristics of social capital. This ERIC Digest examines the relationship between intergenerational learning and social capital and describes research findings and promising programs illustrating how intergenerational programs contribute to learning and the development of social capital.

Journal Writing as an Adult Learning Tool Kerka, Sandra (2002). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. A journal is a tool for processing the raw material of experience in order to integrate it with existing knowledge and create new meaning, and can be used in many ways to foster reflection and adult learning. This ERIC Practice Application Brief reviews the research and practice literature and describes issues and methods involved in incorporating journal writing in adult education.

Modified Sustained Silent Reading - Does it Benefit Beginning Learners of English? Focus on Basics (November 2005). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This Conversation with Focus on Basics was featured in the November 2005 issue of that publication from the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. One of the many research projects carried out at NCSALL's National Adult

ESOL Labsite, or Lab School, in Portland, Oregon, focused on beginning-level reading. The research project tested the use of sustained silent reading (SSR) as a methodology for teaching reading to very beginning learners of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Classes were conducted by Portland Community College (PCC). Sandra Banke, one of the teacher/researchers in the project, and Reuel Kurzet, professional development associate/researcher for the project and chair of PCC's English as a second language (ESL) department, spoke to Focus on Basics about the project and what they learned from it.

Problem-Based Learning and Adult English Language Learners. Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (April 2007). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief describes how problem-based learning aligns with research on second language acquisition, gives guidelines for teachers and administrators on implementing problem-based learning in classes or programs for adults learning English as a second language (ESL), and outlines the benefits and challenges of using a problem-based learning approach with adult English language learners.

QEd: Scientific Evidence for Adult Literacy Educators, Issue 1. Kruidenier, John R., Editor (2007). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. This is the first in a five-issue series for the adult education community published by the National Institute for Literacy. The series will cover ideas and information on the expanding scientific research base on how adults learn to read. This first issue tells the story of how researchers are using the high quality, scientific standards that adult literacy deserves and demands. The issue also discusses another publication, *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* (available as a separate title from the Clearinghouse). The series will also offer other useful resources and discussion lists.

Sustained Silent Reading: A Useful Model. Campagna, Suzanne (March 2005). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This article by Susanne Campagna was featured in the March 2005 issue of Focus on Basics, published by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Teaching reading,

writing, and math while allowing learners to stay focused on their individual goals requires careful planning, excellent time management skills, and flexibility. This is no easy task when an instructor sees her students a mere 10.5 hours a week or less. So why, you might ask, would our program set aside an hour and a half of instructional time every week to have our students engage in sustained silent reading?

Understanding Adult ESL Content Standards. Young, Sarah and Smith, Cristine (September 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. Adult education programs serve learners who are native English speakers and those whose first, or native, language is not English. Native English speakers attend adult basic education (ABE) classes to learn the skills needed to earn high school equivalency certificates or to achieve other goals related to job, family, or further education. English language learners attend English as a second language (ESL) or ABE classes to improve their oral and written skills in English and to achieve goals similar to those of native English speakers. This brief is written for adult ESL teachers and program administrators, as well as educational researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders who work with adult English language students in ESL classes or in mixed ABE classes (with native English speakers and English language students).

Workplace Instruction and Workforce Preparation for Adult Immigrants. Burt, Miriam and Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (September 2007). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. Adult educators across the country are seeking ways to ensure that foreign-born adults will be successful in gaining English proficiency and in entering and advancing at the workplace. This brief reviews the three venues in which federally funded instruction to help immigrants become successful at work is offered – at the workplace, in vocational classes, and in adult English as a second language (ESL) classes. Basic program features and the strengths and challenges of each type of program are described, and recommendations are given for addressing the challenges. This information will help program administrators and teachers select, establish, and improve programs for the adult immigrants they serve. Brief is written for adult ESL teachers

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and program administrators, as well as educational researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders.

Evidence-Based Family Literacy Education

The Importance of Social Interaction and Support for Women Learners: Evidence from Family Literacy Programs. Prins, Esther and Toso, Blaire Willson and Schafft, Kai (May 2008). University Park, PA: Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Pennsylvania State University. “Although many women value and benefit from social interaction in adult education and family literacy, these social dimensions are often treated as tangential or inconsequential. Utilizing data from two studies of family literacy programs in Pennsylvania, this study examined how family literacy programs provide a supportive social space for women in poverty. We found that many learners had limited social support and social ties with people outside their program and few opportunities for recreation. As such, family literacy programs fulfilled important social functions by enabling women to leave the house, enjoy social contact and support, engage in informal counseling, pursue self-discovery and development, and establish supportive relationships with teachers. In sum, adult education and family literacy programs play an important role in helping women in poverty receive social support and, in turn, enhance their psychosocial well-being.”

Making a Difference: A Framework for Supporting First and Second Language Development in Preschool Children of Migrant Farm Workers. Stechuk, Robert A. and Burns, M. Susan (2005). Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development. The authors share the research base, important findings, and recommendations for teaching practices and program policies related to first and second language development in preschool children. Information is presented as responses to four key questions: 1) Can we facilitate children’s acquisition of English without the loss of Spanish (i.e., their first language)? 2) How can we understand the how and when of developmental processes related to first and second language acquisition? 3) Does it matter how adults use English and the children’s home language when they talk to children? 4) When we continue development of the first language and facilitate English, what does it look like day-to-day?

Parenting for Literacy Development and Educational Success: An Examination of the Parent Education Profile. Prins, Esther and Toso, Blaire Willson (May 2008). University Park, PA: Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Pennsylvania State University. “The Parent Education Profile (PEP) is an instrument that rates parents’ support for children’s literacy development. This study examined how the PEP portrays the ideal parent, its assumptions about parenting and education, and the values and ideals it promotes. In sum, many aspects of the PEP evaluate parents by the mainstream (White, middle-class) parenting style. Although the PEP uses the language of scientific research to support this model, it presents no information about reliability or validity. The PEP tends to assume that a universal set of parenting practices best supports children’s literacy development, without fully considering cultural and economic differences. It also implies that parents, particularly mothers, are mainly responsible for their children’s academic success. In order to follow some of the PEP practices, parents need access to resources often unavailable to poor families; yet, the PEP does not seem to encourage recognition of mitigating circumstances that might lower parents’ ratings. Finally, while the PEP encourages staff to ask for parents’ perspectives, it gives parents little say in assessing themselves. In conclusion, caution and cultural sensitivity are needed when using instruments that prescribe, monitor, and rate parental support for education and literacy.”

Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times. Arias, M. Beatriz and Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (January 2008). East Lansing, MI: The Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. This policy brief analyzes the factors involved with generating effective parental involvement of English Language Learners (ELLs). Parents of ELLs face daunting barriers when they attempt to become informed and involved in their child’s school. It is critical to identify practices that improve ELL parental involvement and, in turn, student achievement. While diversity speaks to the need for both traditional and non-traditional models, with a dual-model approach variation in language proficiency is acknowledged, communication is facilitated and communities are recognized and integrated within the school culture. The center recommends that policymakers fund the implementation of non-traditional parental involvement programs that reflect a reciprocal involvement in the school/parent community.

Click on Over. . .

Browsing the Web, TCALL staff found these literacy-related sites particularly relevant, helpful, or just plain fun.



U.S.A Learns is one of the newest and most exciting developments in student access to online learning. A project of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy of the U.S. Education Department in collaboration with the Office of Adult Education of the state of California, U.S.A. Learns is an electronic portal for adults to learn English and improve their basic skills completely free with lessons and videos at three different levels of proficiency. Teachers can register to have their class participate for extra practice online. Worth Visiting! www.usalearns.org

Adult Education Online. Just as exciting to adult education teachers as U.S.A. Learns is to students, this site is a portal for teachers and administrators to assess their own readiness and comfort level with the use of instructional technology and distance learning. The two assessments (each available for teachers and for administrators) are extraordinarily helpful to assess your technology integration skills and distance learning skill and potential. Once you have completed the assessment, Adult Education online will take you to list of resources you may need for technology centered professional development. This is true MUST for teachers and programs looking for a ready way to improve their students persistence! www.adultedonline.org

Adult Literacy Technology Network. This site is a service of the National Institute for Literacy. Here you can access a wealth of technology resources including lesson plans to integrate technology in the classroom, tips for using technology, access to discussion lists, and learner resources; maintained by an extraordinary group of experts including our own Stan Ashlock. www.altn.org/techtraining

National Institute for Literacy (of which ALTN is part). This site offers a variety of services for Literacy professionals. The section on publications has a good selection of reports on reading for educators, parents and students. The section on Facts and Statistics allows you to access reports and facts on a variety of topics of interest to adult educators, including Correctional Education, Health Literacy, ESL Literacy, and Learning Disabilities, among others. novel.nifl.gov

ProLiteracy is arguably the world's largest literacy organization. This website offers information about literacy around the world, including information on programs near you. There are resources for Professional Development and Trainer Certification, as well as access to free Practitioner Resources. Their classroom materials are published by New Reader's Press and can be accessed through their website. www.proliteracy.org

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